

Kentucky Historical Society Executive Committee
Friday, January 20, 2012 - 1:00 PM
Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History
Frankfort, Kentucky Historical Society

Members present: Constance Alexander, Bill Bartleman, J. McCauley Brown, Dawn Browning, Sheila Mason Burton, Marion Forcht, Derrick Hord, John Kleber, Brian Mefford, Mike Mullins, Nancy O'Malley, Wayne Onkst, Laurie Risch, Nancy Smith, Sue Speed, Tommy Turner

Members absent: Verna Fairchild, Mike Hammons, David Lee, Gerry Montgomery, Patti Mullins, Renee Shaw, Louis Stout, Sharon Withers

Guests present: Marty Pinkston (representing Verna Fairchild); Lindy Casebier, Deputy Secretary, Tourism, Arts & Heritage Cabinet; Dana Cox, Director KHS Foundation

Staff present: Scott Alvey, Jody Blankenship, Lisa Cleveland, Keith Jackson, Louise Jones, Trevor Jones, Darrell Meadows, Linda Redmon, Kent Whitworth, Theresa Young

WELCOME

President Sheila Mason Burton called her first board meeting as president to order and welcomed new board members Constance Alexander (Murray, former member of Ky. Oral History Commission), Marty Pinkston (representing Ky. Military History Museum Committee), Wayne Onkst (representing Ky. Archives and Records Commission), Laurie Risch (Executive Director- Behringer-Crawford Museum), and Tommy Turner (Larue County Judge/Executive). New members Gerry Montgomery (Paducah) and Sharon Withers (Lexington) were unable to attend. **Sue Speed moved to approve the October 21, 2011 minutes with a second from Brian Mefford. The motion was approved.**

Board Committees

Nominating Committee – A motion was made by Constance Alexander, seconded by Mac Brown and passed to accept the proposed 2012 nominating committee. The committee will be Mike Hammons-Chair, Brian Mefford, Nancy O'Malley, Sue Speed, and Buck Woodford (KHS Foundation representative). Kent Whitworth stated most committee work is handled by conference call format and at least one staff member will be onsite at KHS to allow for open meeting requirements.

Standing Committee Assignments - Each board member has been assigned to a standing committee (Finance, Governance & Personnel committees).

Finance Committee – Mac Brown made a motion, seconded by Marion Forcht, for the board to approve the original proposed biennial operating budget request for fiscal years 2013 (\$7,041,600) and 2014 (\$6,977,600). The motion passed. Official notification of an additional 8.4% budget reduction is anticipated at the end of the current General Assembly. A plan has been submitted to the Cabinet to cover the additional reductions.

Mr. Whitworth explained that the biennial budget request is normally due the beginning of October; however, this biennium request was not submitted to the Cabinet until after the October Executive Committee meeting.

Board members were referred to an agency overview that aligns the strategic plan with additional budget request items.

In response to a question regarding online vs print publications, Mr. Whitworth stated additional budget reductions may necessitate KHS to transition to online publications over the next 24 months. Currently, the Register is accessible through Project Muse and the Chronicle is available through the KHS website. Kentucky Ancestors would be more difficult, but there are opportunities for growth in digital format due to the nature of online research. This issue will be a priority in the future.

The results of a membership survey during the 2009 strategic plan process showed an aging KHS membership, however, the number one request received from the survey was more online resources (out of 1,100 responses).

Personnel Committee – John Kleber introduced Scott Alvey as the new Assistant Director of KHS. Mr. Alvey stated he is excited to move into the Assistant Director role after being with KHS for 3-1/2 years.

The employee assessment project has been completed to facilitate communication and to clarify roles within the organization. Lisa Cleveland remarked that her recent experience with the assessments was very positive and resulted in valuable and constructive employee/supervisor discussions.

Dr. Kleber reported there are four interns at KHS from several colleges and the KHS employee handbook continues to be in the development stage.

Distinguished Service Award – Following a motion by Marty Pinkston and seconded by Nancy O'Malley, the board approved a distinguished service award to Major Gen. (Ret) Verna Fairchild (former chair of the Kentucky Military History Museum). The award is for her leadership during renovations and reopening of the arsenal and her service to the Kentucky Historical Society Executive Committee. Major General Fairchild will be invited to attend the April board meeting for presentation of the award.

President Burton thanked everyone for the success of the Kentucky Military History Museum (KMHM) reopening ceremonies on November 11, 2011.

Trevor Jones talked on the next phase of the arsenal renovations. Phase 3 is primarily internal with bathroom updates and moving the entrance to the side doors with structural glass doors. The Department of Military Affairs war records division will occupy the unused public space. The plan is not to close the building during the next phase.

Staff Reports

Skylight Replacement Project - Scott Alvey reported the Commonwealth Hall roof is currently being replaced with a metal roof with acoustic and wood materials on the interior ceiling. The project will alleviate the continuous water condensation problem and should be complete by mid March.

KHS Online Collections Access – Trevor Jones reported Museum Collections & Exhibition (MC&E) has implemented the KHS objects catalog through an online program called Pass Perfect. Approximately 5,100 pieces have been added to the online collection since April 2011. The program assists researchers and also increases the opportunity for more loan requests. Mr. Jones showed an example of a cataloged online item, a newly acquisitioned quilt made of pot holders by a special Olympian. Letters were mailed to donors describing how to see their donations online. The goal is to double the number of items cataloged and digitized by next year.

Next, Louise Jones reported the Special Collections & Library (SC&L) is part of the same catalog system (Voyager/Exlibris) that UK and other colleges and universities use. SC&L has begun to add more manuscripts as well as interview level records for the oral histories. To make the catalog more user friendly, a single search box approach similar to a Google search has been implemented. Nearly 2,000 microfilm records were added in the last month. Last year the microfilm map showed 30 counties colored, the map now has 72 counties completed. Many of the manuscript records, while technically correct, are not written in plain language. SC&L is in the process of correcting these to make more descriptive to family history researchers and scholars. A County search function was added to the catalog to find books, microfilm, manuscripts and oral histories available about each county. Many catalog records were improved to include subject headings for place names. The SC&L team has been tracking completed counties on a map of KY on the county search page. They also linked digital images with catalog records so that researchers can tell from the catalog record whether there is digital content (thumbnail right in catalog record). Ms. Jones showed an example of a catalog record for a family bible with the link and thumbnail for the online digital image.

KHS Foundation – Dana Cox highlighted the KHS Foundation annual fund phonathon (January 30-February 10). Postcards were mailed to members, donors, and patrons notifying them of the upcoming calls. Ms. Cox stated KHS has received ten gifts of \$5,000 or more toward this fiscal year's annual fund goal of \$250,000. The Foundation president has agreed to match gifts up to \$1,000 from the Executive Committee and Foundation boards. She thanked the Executive Committee for 100% participation during the past annual fund.

Governor's Inaugural Reception –For the third time, KHS hosted the governor's inaugural public reception on December 7, 2011. Local public officials presented the traditional cake and country ham to the new governor along with music and other activities. Kent Whitworth noted that the governor's inaugural committee used no state funds for the events, including rental of the KHS facilities.

Old Business

Hall of Governors – Kent Whitworth stated a constructive group meeting was held with Mac Brown, Sheila Mason Burton, John Kleber, Robert Rich, Richard Taylor, Scott Alvey, Sara Elliott, Trevor Jones, and Kent Whitworth regarding the development processes of KHS exhibitions. Staff members shared information to help understand the processes and the sensitivity of interpretive themes and labels. To implement best practices, a formal exhibition evaluation strategy will be instituted later this year to measure the objectives of the exhibition and reaction by visitors to the interpretative themes. Mr. Whitworth referred to the phrase "nose in, hands off" by board members and the role of the board as a policy setting body.

Kentucky Folklife Program – Kent Whitworth announced the Kentucky Folklife Program is in the process of transitioning to Western Kentucky University's folklife studies program. KHS Executive Committee board member David Lee, Dean of College of Arts & Letters at WKU (under which this program resides) could not attend the board meeting. The initial agreement is for three years with a reference to a ten year commitment. WKU has posted a new folklife position to support the transition. It is hoped the formal agreement will be presented at the April board meeting and will be effective July 1, 2012. The Ky. Arts Council will maintain a presence in folk and traditional arts through grants and community scholars. Bob Gates, director of the folklife program, will stay on the KHS staff during the transition and after until he reaches the number of years to retire from state government. During the past year, the folklife program has been sustained by other sources outside of general funds.

In November, KHS hired an archivist through a twelve month grant by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to inventory and catalog the collections that make up the Kentucky Folklife Program archives. The project will allow the folklife collection materials to be available to researchers, students and folklorists. It is anticipated the collection may be transferred to WKU along with the folklife program.

Brian Mefford commended the staff on a positive outcome of a difficult budget situation without losing the entire folklife program. The transition should provide a stronger relationship with WKU and south central Kentucky.

Sheila Mason mentioned the longstanding importance of the folklife program to the relevance of history and her hope that KHS will maintain ties to the program.

New Business

Memorandum of Understanding – Northern Kentucky University - A motion was made by John Kleber, seconded by Mac Brown and passed to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between KHS and Northern Kentucky University. The MOU documents the intended relationship; helps build capacity in both organizations and provides mutually beneficial programmatic opportunities.

It was noted that the positive outreach between KHS, the University of Louisville, University of Kentucky and other private colleges and universities was important and a part of the strategic plan.

President Burton thanked KHS for the “I Heart KY History” buttons and lanyards provided to the board members.

Kent Whitworth announced that Sarah Milligan attended a three week Seminar for Historical Administration professional development experience. Trevor Jones will represent KHS on the American Association of State and Local History program committee. Jody Blankenship and Kent Whitworth will participate in a workshop conducted by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Darrell Meadows was named Secretary of the Association of Documentary Editing.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Theresa Young